

# MODERN PAINTERS

## REVIEWS

NEW YORK

### “A Disagreeable Object”

*SculptureCenter // September 15–November 26, 2012*



**Anicka Yi**

*The Possibility of an Island II*, 2012. Custom glass perfume bottle, saline water, colored contact lenses, vinyl tubing, and air pump.

THE EXHIBITION TAKES ITS title from Giacometti’s Surrealist sculptures, and like these objects, the works here oscillate between desire and something more sinister. Curator Ruba Katrib departs from the subversive power that the uncanny held for the Surrealists in a show that interrogates this force in the present tense. The 20 artists included all ask questions that are colored by the implications of technology, but rather than implying a break, the exhibition draws upon traces of Surrealism in contemporary practice. Martin Soto Climent’s contribution here is the one that most directly recalls the Surrealist aesthetic. His series of prints, “The Equation of Desire,” 2010–11, created by rolling and folding vintage magazines and subsequently photographing them to form new images, calls to mind the Surrealist practices of *étrécissement* (a process of removing layers of visible planes to reveal hidden images) and collage (a cumulative process). Several works imply a clouding of the boundaries between bodies, labor, and products. Pamela Rosenkranz’s *Awesome Power*, 2012, a circle of white sneakers filled with silicone in a range of flesh tones, refers chromatically to a living body—but one that is embedded in a product. Similarly, Anicka Yi combines the manufactured and the corporeal in her sculptures *The Possibility of an Island I, II, and III*, all 2012: amorphous bottles with colored contact lenses, inorganic sheaths for eyes, floating in a bubbling saline solution.

Many of the other pieces on view contain fruitful juxtapositions that recall Surrealist approaches. Rather than opposing destruction and creation, Camille Henrot's *Objets Augmentés*, 2012, created from objects found in New York and coated with earth and tar, teases out an ambiguity between these two forces. Sound from Ian Cheng's video *This Papaya Tastes Perfect*, 2011, a reenactment of a fight via motioncapture technology, inflects the basement. The adjacency of Cheng's guttural audio has a haunting impact in the corridor where Johannes VanDerBeek's speckled paperpulp works recall archaeological artifacts and rocklike or sinewy shapes from nature. Also in the basement, Aneta Grzeszykowska's video *Headache*, 2008, is a strong anchor for the exhibition. The body appears segmented, and individual limbs appear to move with a thing-like quality against a black background, each part animated with its own agency, creating a sequence that is mesmerizing. Though they employ different processes and proceed with distinct goals, the artists here share certain attitudes or formal languages that go beyond the exhibition. The strength of "A Disagreeable Object" is in its departing from a grounded set of questions while allowing for an uneasy order and unexpected exchanges. —**Clara Halpern**

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